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PP RUEHFK
DE RUEHKO #4899 2400243
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 280243Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5790
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA// PRIORITY
RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 7826
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 1164
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3944
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1210
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0076
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1756
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USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION Q NORTH KOREA - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Most Monday morning papers front-paged reports from Seoul regarding a proposal made by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to return wartime operational control of ROK troops to Seoul in 2009.

11. "North Korea: The Fate of Military-First Policy" The moderate Tokyo Shimbun editorialized (8/27): "It has been nearly two months since North Korea launched a barrage of ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan. With rumors that Pyongyang will soon conduct an underground nuclear test, it seems that North Korea is placing even more emphasis on its policy of giving the greatest priority to the country's military. Within these moves can be seen the limits of dictatorship as a system of government. It appears that the missile launches were a major miscalculation on the part of Kim Jong Il.... Kim was surprised by the strong US reaction that the launches elicited, as the aim was to get the US to lift its financial sanctions on Pyongyang. The Bush administration, however, has not shown any signs of complying with the DPRK's call for direct talks....

12. "The North Korean economy is on the brink of collapse. 'Military first' of course means that economic development and public welfare are put on the backburner, and the massive floods this summer have only deepened the people's dissatisfaction with the regime. Nuclear weapons and missiles are the only tools Kim has at his disposal for riding out these crises at home and abroad.... Although North Korea has the option of returning to the six-party talks in an effort to buy time, neighboring countries are taking a much more severe view of the DPRK than in the past; continuing isolation could threaten the regime's survival. The recent missile launches have proved one thing -- that Pyongyang's brinkmanship no

longer works. The international community is watching closely to see what Kim Jong Il does next."

DONOVAN